NUMB. XLII.

THE PLAIN DEALER.

——*Cinis & Manes, & Fabula fies.* PERS.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14. 1724.

EVER since I was a School-Boy, I have been fond of walking in *Westminster-Abbey*, where, when my Heart is heated, by the Violence of some unruly Passion, I enjoy a cool Composure, and a kind of venerable Refreshment. ——Its dusky Cloisters, majestick Isles, Quire, Organs, Royal Tombs, and reverend Variety of strong, impressive, Images, have a never-failing Power to *reduce* my Mind from Transport, when Hope, Prosperity. or Pleasure, have betray'd it into Vanity; or, to *relieve* it, when disorder'd, by a Weight of Anguish, or Oppression.

Death, and the Sun, says a *French* Writer, *are Two Things not to be look'd upon with a steady Eye.*—— Though there is something in his Observation, rather pretty, than just, yet so far is certainly true, That we are unqualify'd to think, serenely, on our *Dissolution*, while we are surrounded by the Noise, and Hurry of the World, in its ambitious Scenes; or soften'd into sensual Wishes, by the Languor of an idle Solitude.——While *we* are Part of our own Prospect, we can never view it justly: But, in such a Situation as the *Abbey*, we are plac'd, as it were, out of it; and, from this antient *Stand* of Death, look back upon a Country, which we seem no longer to have any Concern in; and which, therefore, we can judge of with the necessary Clearness and Impartiality.

The Mind that is stedfast enough to meditate, calmly, on Death, will be arm'd to resist the Strength, and the Flattery, of human Passions. ——Such Thoughts, if they make us not *better*, will, at least, make us *wiser*; since that must moderate our Wishes, which puts us out of Countenance at their Levity: And, who can reflect, without being asham'd, that, while every Thing, in *Life*, is accidental, and *Death*, the only Certainty; we go on to act, notwithstanding, as if all Things else were *infallible*, and Death but *accidental*.

I, sometimes, suffer myself to be shut up for Five or Six Hours among the *Tombs*, where I sit down without Ceremony, or Reprehension, among the proudest of those Princes, who were, once, too stately to be convers'd with, but at Distance, and with Fear and Reverence. ——I possess, in common, with the Spiders (their Companions, and most constant Servants, who spread Net-work over their Trophies) the unenvied Privilege of surrounding those last Beds of forgotten Majesty. —— Here I bury myself, in solemn Silence, and imprint my Imagination with Images, which awaken Thought, and prepare me for Humility.——The stain'd, and melancholy, Light, that enters faintly through the painted Windows, as if it wore a decent *Mourning*, to become the Scene it opens to me, guides me, slowly, by the cloister'd Allies, dusty Tombs, and weeping Statues, 'till I am lost in that still Pomp of figur'd Sorrow, which, on every Side, incloses me.

From finish'd Pray'r, the Flock disperse apace,
And each glad Foot forsakes the dreary Place:
The hooded Prebend, *plods along before;*
And the last Virger, *claps the ringing Door.*

Then, thoughtful, ling'ring, curious, and alone,
In the dark Temple, when the rest are gone;
No Noise invades my Ear; No murm'ring Breath:
Not one low Whisper, *in the* Hall *of* Death!
No trampling Sound swims o'er the silent Floor;
But the slow Clock, *that counts the sliding Hour!*

Here, indulging Contemplation, I forget my Cares, and Misfortunes, and disencumber myself from the Forms, and Embarrassments of Converse. I become the Inhabitant of a quiet, and unbusy World, where all is serene and peaceful: I am disturb'd by no Fears, inflam'd by no Anger, inspir'd by no Hope, tormented by no Jealousy: I can expect, without Impatience; and be disappointed, without Affliction: The Dust, which is scatter'd round me, and which, once, was Living Flesh, as I am, choaks the Fountains of my Pride, and produces in me a Mortification, that is too strong for all my Passions.

I was present, very lately, when one of those Monumental Historians, whose Imployment it is to draw a Profit from reading Lectures, on these Resting Places of our antient Princes, was shewing the Tomb of *Henry the Fifth*, to a Circle of Holiday Strollers. ——After having inform'd the tasteless Wonderers, That this was *He*, who *conquer'd* France! That His *Son* was *crown'd* in *Paris!* That He married the *French King's Daughter!* And what else he had been able to collect from the Records of this great Prince's Reign; he pointed to a Plain, Wooden, Worm-eaten, Coffin, that was plac'd upon the Ground, by this Tomb's Side, and told them, That it contain'd the Body of Queen *Catherine*, the beautiful Wife of this Triumphant *Henry*. ——Adding, That for a small, additional, Contribution, he would unlock the Coffin, and let them look in upon her Corpse, which lay there, perfect, and undecay'd, though she had been dead almost Three hundred Years. They had Curiosity enough to pay the Price demanded, and the Proposer made good his Promise, unveiling to their Sight, and Touch, the Reliques of that Royal Charmer.

I cannot express the Indignation, and Concern, which this Scene gave me.——Her lovely Limbs, which, once, were thought too tender for the Wind to blow upon; and which were never seen without Joy, Reverence, and Wonder, by the Conqueror of Her Father's Kingdom, and the Sovereign of This in which she died: *Now*, lay neglected, naked, and expos'd! denied even Earth to cover her! and made a Spectacle, for Entertainment of a Croud of common Wanderers!

Superior, as this Lady was, in her Beauty, Birth, and Fortune, what Præ-eminence in Death have all these given her, above the *Meanest*, and most *Unlovely?* ——After having made her *Life* a changeful Course of Sorrow and Calamity, they left her destitute, in *Death*, without the Decency of a *Grave* to *shelter* her! ——There, now, she lies a Proof of transitory Greatness! To comfort the *Wretched*, with this Reflection, when they look in upon her expos'd Remains, That *Nature* has made no Difference between a *Royal*, and a *Vulgar*, Body; But, that, taking away what was added by *Fortune*, each, from the

[Price Two-Pence.]

the Moment of Death, is the other's Equal to all Eternity.

What Rank, or Condition, is there among us, which may not draw, from this great School of Moral Reasoning, some Observation for their Benefit? ——Even the *Unwary* and *Extravagant*, whose Lives are a continued Luxury! and to whom the Miseries of *Debt* appear remote, and without Terror! Even *They*, may find a Lesson among these *Tombs*; for there they may be shewn the Bodies of great Men, doing Penance in their Velvet Coffins, and *imprison'd after Death*, to satisfy the Malice of their stubborn Creditors, as if the Influence of sordid Money could extend its Cruelties beyond Life, and had a Privilege to disturb, by Avarice, the sleeping Ashes of departed Sovereigns!

Is a Man insulted? wrong'd? betray'd? Does he hate his distrusted Enemy? Are his Thoughts imploy'd on Revenge? And does he break his Sleep with Stratagems, to avoid, or retaliate, the Injustice that may be done him? Let him walk with me in this instructive Circle, and I will shew him the Dust of a murder'd Monarch, mixing quietly with *his*, who murder'd him. ——I will tread with him over Earth that is passive, and ferments not, though compos'd of united Atoms from the mingled Bodies of those Men, whose battling Interests and Affections, while they *liv'd*, shook the Kingdom like an Earthquake! ——When the *Quarrelsome* consider *This*, they ought to blush at their little Hatreds, and grow asham'd to let their Souls be divided by Animosity, when Death may crumble their Bodies together, and incorporate them with their most malicious Enemy!

There is no Fortune so *exalted*, but it may find a *Check* in this dark Mansion: Nor any Condition so *dejected*, but that it may be sure of a *Comfort*: Every Stone that we look upon, in this Repository of past Ages, is an *Entertainment*, and a *Monitor*.——I never leave its venerable Gloom, without finding my Mind cooler, and more compos'd, than when I enter'd. ——I sink deep into myself, and see my Heart without Disguise, in its good, or evil Propensities: And I gather Power from these strong Impressions to resist Pleasure, Pride, Ambition, or low Avarice: And to fortify the Impulses of Humility, Forgiveness, Charity, and the Virtues of Content and Quietude.

There was publish'd, a few Years since, a Poem call'd WESTMINSTER-ABBEY. I am sorry that the Author's Name was not printed with it. There is something highly elevated in his Genius, that is sweetly serious, and sublimely melancholy! ——The Verses inserted above, I am indebted for to that Poem: And I shall borrow from the same Piece, these following, which, I will take the Liberty to affirm, are as fine ones, as were ever written.——— I ask Pardon for a Transposition, and Alteration, or Two, which I have only made, that I might have the Pleasure of collecting into one View, as many of the Beauties, as could possibly be drawn together in the narrow Compass of my Paper.

Lead on, my Muse! while, trembling, I essay
To trace thy Footsteps, through the Cloister'd Way:
Throw a thick Veil around thy radiant Head,
And lead me through the Dwellings *of the* Dead.
Where the still Banner, faded, and decay'd,
Nods, pendant, o'er its mould'ring Master's Head.
Where Loves, *transform'd to Marble Angels, moan:*
And weeping Cherubs, *seem to sob in Stone.*

Seize Time: *and, by the Pinions, urge his Stay;*
Stop him, a while, in his Eternal Way.
Bid him recline his Scythe, on each pale Tomb,
And name the Tenant of the darksome Room.
O, Muse! with Care, the blended Dust explore;
And re-inspire, and wake, *the sleeping Floor.*

To mount their Throne, here, Monarchs bend their
O'er Pavements, where their Predecessors lay: [*Way,*
Ye Sons *of* Empire! *who, in pompous Hour,*
Attend, to wear the cumbrous Robe of Pow'r!
When ye proceed along the shouting Way,
Think, there's a Second Visit, still to pay.
And, when in State, on buried Kings you tread,
And swelling Robes sweep o'er th' imperial Dead!
While, like a God, your worshipp'd Eyes move round,
Think, then; O, think! you walk on treach'rous Ground.
Though firm *the chequer'd Pavement seems to be,*
'Twill, surely, open, *and give Way, for* Thee!

While crouding Lords, address their Duties near
Th' anointing Prelate! *and the kneeling* Peer!
While, with obsequious Diligence, they bow,
And spread the careful Honours, *o'er thy Brow:*
While the high-rais'd Spectators shout around,
And the long Isles, and vaulted Roofs, resound:
Then, snatch *a sudden Thought, and turn thy Head,*
From the loud Living, *to the silent* Dead.
With conscious Eye, the neighb'ring Tombs survey:
These will instruct thee, better far, than They!
What, now, thou art, *in yon gay Homage see:*
But These *best shew,* what thou art sure to be!

I am ignorant what Reception this excellent Performance met with in the World; but, I hope, for the Honour of my Country, that it was not a bad one!——The whole Poem is full of Beauties; but, if it had no other Merit than appears in what I have here copied from it, every candid Judge of Poetry must allow it to have deserved the highest Applause and Admiration.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

A Catalogue of BOOKS.

Consisting of a Collection of the choicest Authors as well Antient as Modern, in *Greek, Latin, English, Italian, French*, and other Languages; in most Parts of Learning as Architecture, Medals, Husbandry, Voyages, History, and Classicks *cum Notis Variorum*, &c. Amongst many valuable Books are

Plato Gr. Lat. a Serrano, 3 Vol.
Suiceri Thesaur. Eccles. 2 Vol.
Beveregii Pand. Canon. 2 Vol.
Josephus Gr. Lat. Hudson, 2 Vol.
Philo, Gr. Lat. Lut. Par.
Dion Cassius, Gr. Lat. Han.
Scriptores post Bedam
Matt. Westmonast. (Edit Opt.)
Buchanani Opera, 2 Vol.
Martene Thesaur. Anecdot. 5 Vol.
S. Cyprian. Oxon.
—— Irenæus a Grabe.
Pindar. Gr. Lat. Oxon.
Aristophanes a Kustero.
Cicero, 2 Vol. a Grutero.
Virgil. a Servio, R. Steph.
Suidæ Lexicon a Kustero, 3 Vol.
L'Antiquitate Montfaucon, 10 Vol.
Perrault Hommes illustres.
Domat Loix Civiles.

Clarendon's History 3 Vol. large Paper.
History of England, 3 Vol.
Whitlock's Memorials (best)
Ashmole's Order of the Garter.
Hume's House of Douglas, &c.
Irish Statutes (best)
Collier's Eccles. History, 2 Vol.
Vitruvius Britannicus, 2 Vol. large Paper.
Collect of Voyages, 4 Vol.
Hooke's Micographia.
Howel's History of the World, 3 Vol.
Bishop Stillingfleet's Works, 6 Vol.
Coke's Reports, large Paper, compleat (best.)
Year Books, best, compleat.
Rolle's Abridgement.

With near 2000 other Articles in most Parts of Literature, which will be sold this Day, beginning at Nine in the Morning, at *W. Mears's* Shop, the *Lamb* without *Temple-Bar*. Where Catalogues may be had: As also at Mr. *Strahan's* in *Cornhil*, Mr. *Meighan's* under *Gray's-Inn* Gate *Holbourn*, Mr. *Lewis's* in *Russel-Street Covent-Garden*, Mr. *Jackson's* in *Pall-Mall*. Booksellers; at the *Chapter* Coffee-House in *Pater-Noster-Row*, and at the *British* at the *Mews Gate*.

This Day are Published,

PROPOSALS *for Printing by* SUBSCRIPTION,
The Second Volume of
MAHOMETISM Explained; being a System of the Religion of the *Mahometans*, including, more particularly, their *Ecclesiastical History*, with the Lives of their *Patriarchs*. Together with the *Rites, Festivals, Fasts, Holy Days, Ceremonies, Devotions*, &c. used by the *Mahometans* throughout the Year. With many Curiosities never treated of by any *European* Writers. As also a most Remarkable *Description* of the *Last Day*. Written in *Spanish*, intermix'd with *Arabick*, in the Year 1603, for the Instruction of the *Morisoes* in *Spain*, who, to avoid the Cruelties of the *Inquisition*, were forced to receive *Baptism*. By MAHOMET RABADAN, an *Arragonian Moor*. Translated from the *Original Manuscript*, never in Print, now in the Library of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of *Oxford*. By Mr. MORGAN Proposals are delivered *gratis*, by *R. Knaplock*, in St. *Paul's* Church-yard; *J. Peele*, in *Pater-noster-Row*; and *J. Clarke* under the *Royal Exchange*. Where may be had Vol. I. Price 5 s.

Printed for J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*. Where *Letters* and *Advertisements* are taken in.